

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 000106

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/PMBS, DRL, DRL/CRA, INR/EAP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SOCI](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: MADRASAH TEACHER TRAINING PROJECT UNDERWAY IN THE PHILIPPINES

REF: A. 04 MANILA 6122

[B](#). 04 MANILA 5479

[C](#). 04 STATE 193469

[D](#). 04 MANILA 2188

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: A \$400,000 DRL-sponsored "Madrasah Teacher Training Project" is now underway in the Philippines to train 28 madrasah educators in U.S. educational practices and values. Upon their return to the Philippines, they are expected to share what they learned via specified local projects and at a national "networking" conference. The project appears worthwhile, though rather costly for the comparatively modest results sought. Successful implementation of the project will assist in bringing the Philippines' Islamic educational system into the mainstream. Integrating this effort with other ongoing USG projects advancing this same goal will better ensure optimum use of USG resources. The Mission's Education Committee will coordinate in identifying promising projects for funding in FY 2005 under the Human Rights and Democracy Fund. END SUMMARY.

New project

[1](#)2. (U) The DRL-sponsored "Madrasah Teacher Training Project" (Ref c) is now underway in the Philippines. The USD 400,000 project is funded by the ESF/Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF) administered by DRL. The Institute for Training and Development (ITD), a US-based non-profit NGO, serves as the project's implementing agency, and began the first phase in December 2004. The project is focused on strengthening and improving the madrasah education system prevalent in Muslim areas of the southern Philippines. Muslim educators will be exposed to U.S. educational practices and values during the course of the project. An outline follows:

-- Phase one: ITD selects participants and builds support for the project among in-country partner organizations and international aid agencies;

-- Phase two: Twenty-eight leaders from madaris in Mindanao travel to the U.S. for a three-week study tour. In the U.S., they attend presentations by university professors and other experts, and visit schools, religious organizations, and the Department of State and other government offices in Washington;

-- Phase three: The teachers apply what they have learned through programs in their schools and communities in the Philippines. Support for these projects is provided in the form of "mini-grants" in the amount of USD 2,000 each. The teachers will also share their experiences with other Filipino Muslim educators at a national "Educator Networking" conference.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Poloff recently reviewed efforts to implement the project in meetings in Davao City, Mindanao. Sally Habana-Hafner, Project Manager for ITD, confirmed to poloff that phase one of the project had begun and that selection of participants was underway. At this meeting, Alastair Douglas, Deputy Project Director of AUSAID's Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao project (BEAM), also reviewed ways best to leverage the substantial efforts BEAM has invested in madrasah education in support of the current DRL project.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Separately, members of the Association of Muslim Students at the University of the Philippines in Mindanao expressed support for the project as well as enthusiasm for combining secular education and Islamic values. Ustadz Mahmud Adilao of the Ulama League of the Philippines commented that madaris offering a full range of religious and secular courses would be popular with Muslim students by helping them gain skills and find jobs. (Ref B described the Philippine Department of Education's latest efforts to modernize the Islamic educational system by making it conform to national educational standards.)

Other USG projects

15. (U) In the context of the State visits of President Arroyo and President Bush to each other's capitals in 2003, Mission had launched a 5-year USD 33 million education program focused primarily on Muslim Mindanao. Led and administered by USAID, the program involves a range of USG agencies and local, U.S. and international NGO's. The ITD project comes as a very welcome addition to the larger White House-based initiative in the Philippines. To ensure maximum impact of our USD 400,000 investment through IDT, we will work to integrate that program with our ongoing educational campaign in Mindanao. Our other projects to improve the level of education being offered in madaris include:

-- The Mindanao English Language Education Enhancement Project (MELEEP), funded by the Public Affairs Section, trains English teacher trainers from the southern Philippines to teach more effectively. As Ref b noted, English language is a key addition to the new unified madrasah curriculum;

-- A senior English-language Fellow who speaks Arabic is working in the Department of Education on English teacher training, funded by the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The focus of the training program is primarily in Mindanao;

-- Assistance for the Comprehensive Educational Development of Mindanao (ASCEND Mindanao) trains and assists school administrators and ustadz from selected public schools and private madaris in the application of the improved curricula and materials. The two-year project is funded by AID;

-- Under the Tudlo Mindanao (Teach Mindanao) project, Peace Corps volunteers work with Mindanao teachers to develop and adapt teacher training sessions for English Content Based Instruction in math, science and information and communications technology.

We advance all of these projects through our Country Team efforts, including advocacy with the national government, engagement with the ARMM and local government, vigorous public diplomacy (including student and teacher exchanges), and consciousness of the larger security environment, including the GRP-MILF peace process.

Comment

16. (SBU) Successful implementation of the IDT project will further assist in bringing the Philippines' Islamic educational system into the mainstream. The project should yield good and valuable results. However, at USD 400,000 for only 28 direct beneficiaries of a three-week U.S. tour plus a teacher conference, it comes in at the higher end of cost-to-benefit calculations compared to other USG programs now underway in Mindanao. It is essential that such welcome projects be designed and implemented from the earliest stages in the closest coordination with current efforts to ensure the most effective use of USG resources. For the 2005 HRDF, the Mission's interagency Education Committee -- with representation from USAID, Peace Corps, Public Affairs, and the Political Section -- will identify promising projects in country that fill identified gaps in current USG assistance, in close consultation with Department's DRL.
Ricciardone